

Abstract

Apparatus and a method for serving telecommunications customers, using the transmission capabilities of a Packet Network. A customer having Customer Premises Equipment (CPE) that includes a Customer Premises Equipment (CPE)/Gateway for communicating with a Packet Network, is connected to a port of the Packet Network. The customer is connected to the Gateway of a Home Switch via the Packet Network, and is also connected to Gateways of one or more Guest Switches. The customer has telephone numbers in the Home Switch and each of the Guest Switches. Callers can call the customer as if that customer were directly served by the Home Switch or any of the Guest Switches, using the appropriate telephone numbers. The customer can call telephones accessible from the Home Switch as well as any of the Guest Switches by specifying to the CPE/Gateway that the connection via the Packet Network is to be to a port of the selected Home or Guest Switch. Connections are then completed from that selected switch. Advantageously, the customer and callers to that customer are billed only for the short, usually local, call rate from the selected Home or Guest Switch. Advantageously, the customer can make outgoing calls dynamically via any of the Guest Switches if the Home Switch is overloaded or out of service.